

"THE TORONTO FREEMAN."

A CIRCULAR LETTER FROM MR. M'GEE, M. P. P.

MY DEAR SIR:—

As I was instrumental in enlisting the support of several friends in your neighborhood for the *Toronto Freeman*, I take this means of informing you of facts which have lately transpired, in reference to that newspaper, and which, in the interests of public justice, you are at liberty to communicate to any one you please, on my authority.

When the types and subscription list of the *Catholic Citizen* were purchased, in 1858, it was in order to suppress that most objectionable paper, which had used the cloak of religion for all the commonest purposes of partizan warfare. The funds by which this purchase was made were, in part, contributed by some personal friends of mine, and the prospectus of the new paper, the *Freeman*, was drafted by a Committee, of which I was one. When question arose as to the Editor, I suggested the name of Mr. J. G. Moylan, Teacher, of Guelph, and at my suggestion he was sent for. When the arrangements for transferring the *bonus* to the new Editor and Publisher were far enough advanced for action, it was proposed to bind the Editor under some penalty, to adhere faithfully to the non-partizan clause, and other conditions of the Prospectus; but I resisted any such stipulation being imposed, because I contended that with the example of the late *Citizen* before his eyes, our best guarantee for the new Editor's independence would be found in his own interest.

At two subsequent periods, I again interposed, as you know, to obtain aid for the journal, without which I was assured it could not possibly go on; once when Mr. Mallon, the original partner of Mr. Moylan, was bought out, and his share transferred to the latter gentleman, and again under the threatened criminal prosecution of the Orange Grand Master, Mr. Hillyard Cameron.

I refer to these facts, simply and solely to show that I had some right to ask from the *Freeman* the insertion of any letter of reasonable length, written over my own signature, and for every sentence of which I, and not the Editor, would be necessarily responsible. During the past two months, once before and once since the general election, I made such a request. In the former case, my letter to Mr. Macarow of Kingston, was withheld three weeks under one pretext or another, and more recently, a temperate and measured disclaimer of any participation in the recent electioneering tactics of the *Freeman* was, after a fortnight's detention, returned to me, with a note, as deficient in candor as it was barren of gratitude. The substance of the communication, thus suppressed, is all that I will trouble you with, in order that you may fully understand the turpitude of this conduct. It was entitled, "*A short Address to the Readers of the Toronto Freeman*," and would have filled a column and a half, perhaps, of that Journal. It contained just six paragraphs. The *first* briefly alluded to my well known public interest in the *Freeman*; the *second* referred to the policy of *conciliation* towards the reform party of which I had been an advocate in the House of Assembly, and the *Freeman* one of the organs in the Press; the *third* deprecated in mild but explicit language the sudden desertion of that policy, without sufficient public cause *shown*, on the immediate eve of the late general election; the *fourth* and *fifth* illustrated the folly and danger of fickleness and disregard of principle in political crises; and the *sixth* expressed my personal gratitude to those communities of our friends such as Lanark, Victoria, Haldimand and Perth, which honorably adhered to the conciliation policy of the last four years, and to prominent individuals who had preserved the same consistent course. This was the whole sum and substance of the communication which Mr. Moylan refused to permit me to publish over my own name, through the medium of those types of which, but for my friends and myself, he never would have been the master.

The personal wrong, however, is but a small part of the far greater public wrong, done by the *Freeman's* perversion. That paper was not a private chattel, of which the gentleman in charge could say: "I have a right to do as I like with my own." It was founded and sustained chiefly by the contributions of Catholic electors in Upper and Lower Canada. It had a representative character and a representative responsibility. The Toronto Conference, immediately preceding the Banquet of the 29th of September, 1859,

1861
660

composed of locally influential men, Reeves, Councillors, Aldermen, Presidents of Societies, and Chairmen of numerous Meetings, had given it that character, in a series of resolutions, explicit and unequivocal. That Conference was held more than twelve months after the Brown-Dorion crisis of July, 1858, and no new facts have since been publicly elicited, so far as I know, which would justify a total abandonment of the understanding then entered into—an understanding cordially accepted by the Editor, (to use his own words at the subsequent Banquet), "for weal or for woe,"—words which for more than a year afterwards, up to the very day of the late general election—were never once attempted to be explained away, still less withdrawn or retracted, or denied, as they now are.

If there are good and sufficient *public reasons* for such a summersault being performed, they have not been stated in the *Freeman's* apology, so far. The pretext that it was to punish Mr. Brown, personally, is inconsistent with the facts which have come to light. The offences of Mr. Brown were before the Editor's eyes in 1858 and 1859, as fully as in 1861, but then he contended for giving him, in the spirit of conciliation, "a fair trial." It could not be "to punish Mr. Brown," that Dr. Connor, one of the early benefactors of the paper, was malignantly attacked; it need not be to punish Mr. Brown, that the liberal and upright Adam Wilson was opposed; it need not be to punish Mr. Brown, that the "come weal, come woe," Mr. Moylan, of 1859, presented himself side by side with Mr. Allen, the Jailor, to glorify the alliance of "Orange and Green," from the balcony of the veteran head of the family compact, Chief Justice Robinson. Whatever motives have led to this perversion of the paper from the purposes to which its Prospectus, and the resolutions of September, 1859, bound it in honor to adhere, those motives, so far, are of a *private* character, and have never been, as, perhaps, they cannot afford to be, made *public*.

The guilt of the *Freeman* then, is this: that *publicly* its conductor gave his adhesion to a line of policy, from its inception to the very eve of a general election, which line of policy he suddenly abandoned, without any sufficient *public* justification for so doing. That in order to mislead others to take the same course he returned to old outworn controversies dating so far back as 1851, controversies which had been, in our own interest, decreed to be closed forever, when the policy of conciliation was inaugurated, on the suppression of the *Catholic Citizen*. That being bound to independence as between Canadian partizans, his attacks, public and personal, were all delivered on one side of politics, and his advocacy all on the other side. That he used, in this way, the authority, and abused the confidence placed in him by many zealous friends and supporters, who, he right well knew, utterly disapproved of his making a *Mirror* or *True Witness* of himself and the paper. That, moreover, he concealed his proposed change to so far advanced an hour, that these consistent friends and supporters, were unable to counteract the mischief done by his desertion of his independent post, until the contest was past, and the mischief in some instances beyond repair, for the present; in other words, the guilt of ingratitude, deception, and insincerity, are clearly fastened by his own acts upon this gentleman, whom you and I, and many others, have for the past three years exerted every effort to sustain in this position, so abused, and so dishonored. His new friends may, perhaps, do more for him in that way than his old ones, but they cannot do it more freely, or with better hearts.

These are the facts, my dear sir, which in the interests of public justice, I feel bound to communicate to you, in the present circular. I cannot conclude without the expression of a hope that we shall have, ere long, a press governed by higher motives than have swayed our former friend from his allegiance to his principles and his supporters. As to him, all that needs be said, is told in the proverb: "If a man deceives me once, it is *his* fault; if twice, it is *my* own."

I have the honor to subscribe myself,

Yours very truly,

THOS. D'ARCY M'GEE.

MONTREAL, Aug. 5th, 1861.

* * * I may be obliged, from time to time, to send circulars to you on this and similar subjects, in which you will be good enough to excuse the printed form adopted.

en of
That
acts
der-
the
very
n or

not
y, is
eyes
ion,
the
lam
i, of
en,"
ives
s of
ave

e of
ned,
urse
own
n of
blic
sed,
ters,
the
tent
ost,
rds,
an,
ion,
nes,

cate
ere
rin-
me

l.

, in